

THE "FARMERS' FRIEND": CREATING NATIONALIST, CHINESE

FARMERS IN RURAL 1950s TAIWAN

by

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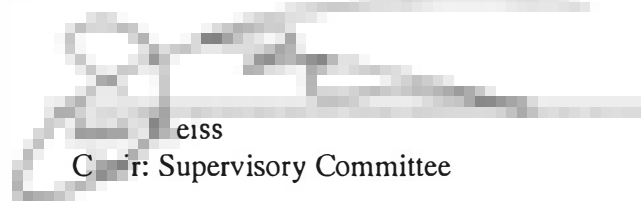
	
	
	

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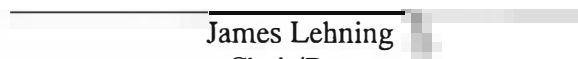
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ABSTRACT

In the early 1950s, the Nationalist government on Taiwan sought to generate support for their regime by turning farmers into modern, Nationalist citizens. Using the journal, the "Farmers' Friend," the Nationalist government and Taiwan's Provincial Farmers' Association presented themselves as friends to farmers by teaching them what it meant to be modern, Nationalist citizens. At the same time, the organization's director, Ma You-yue, provided a model for farmers to emulate. While the journal was a tool the Nationalists used to further state penetration, it also provided a limited space for farmers to express their concerns. This thesis looks at the citizen creation strategies the Nationalists used in the journal. Although these strategies were similar to those used during the Republican period to "awaken" Chinese citizens, Taiwan's unique experience required the Nationalists to emphasize Chinese culture over modernization.

Dedicated to the Memory of my older brother and inspiration, Kyle Knowles

1967-2008

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INTRODUCTION

*Numbering nearly four million people, making up half of the population, it is so pitiful that such a large group doesn't have a garden to express their ideas!*¹

In October 1950, the Farmers' Association of Taiwan began a new journal which eventually became known as the "Farmers' Friend." This journal was the Farmers' Association's attempt to create an intellectual garden (園地), a place where farmers could voice their thoughts and concerns. Through the contents of the journal, and assisted by the implementation of land reforms, the Nationalist government and the Farmers' Association sought to create a unified farmer identity, an identity where farmers saw themselves, not as tenants, owner/cultivators or landlords, but as patriotic citizens participating in a modern China. Just as a farmer must first sow seeds, water, fertilize, and prune in order to reap fruit, the leadership of the Nationalist government and the Farmers' Association also needed to nourish farmers. This was done using the "Farmers' Friend" to spread the message out to local Farmers' Association leaders.

¹ "發刊詞 (Opening Statements)," 農會通訊 (*Farmers' Association Communications Bi-Weekly*) 1950.

These leaders were then supposed to pass the message on to local farmers. In this manner, the government attempted to transform Taiwanese farmers into modern, nationalist citizens.

The tactics used throughout the journal were not particularly new. Ever since the last years of the Qing dynasty, Chinese intellectuals looked to create modern Chinese citizens and the Nationalist government continued to do so upon arriving in Taiwan. However, while the Nationalist's citizenship creation strategy in Taiwan mimicked earlier attempts to create modern citizens in China, it also faced challenges unique to the island.

As a result of Japanese colonialism, the roots for modern society already existed in Taiwan by the time the Nationalist government arrived. The Nationalists sought to continue state building begun by the Japanese yet they were concerned about Japanese influences on the island. Therefore, citizenship creation focused not only on modernization but on emphasizing Taiwan's Chinese roots. In other words, the Nationalist government did not seek to merely create a modern citizen as they did in China, but to create a modern, Chinese citizen, devoid of outside influence.

Drawing upon the work of John Fitzgerald as a model, this thesis looks at citizenship creation messages within the pages of the "Farmers' Friend," considering

how it was used by the Nationalist government to present images of the ideal citizen. Fitzgerald writes that in the early Republican period, the state (meaning the Nationalist Party) sought to “awaken” the people of China. However, this awakening was not an individual affair, but it was directed by the state, which set the terms and defined what awakening meant.² In Taiwan, the Nationalist party continued similar methods of molding rural citizens. Through the Farmers' Association and the "Farmers' Friend," the Nationalist party was able to dictate the meaning of modern citizenship, which to them meant supporting the Nationalist regime, participating in strengthening the state and renewing a connection with their Chinese roots.

As a part of this effort, the Nationalist government and the Farmers' Association presented themselves as friends to farmers who protected them and looked out for their best interests. Since instruction was spread through the Farmers' Association, its leaders became the exemplars of the model citizen, which also corresponds to Fitzgerald's argument of the state performing the role of awakener. Furthermore, Fitzgerald writes how the ideology of an awakened China shifted from being one unified state to a unified party and eventually to one “awakened” leader.³ While

² John Fitzgerald, *Awakening China: Politics, Culture and Class in the Nationalist Revolution* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1996). 330.

³ Ibid. 6,7.

Fitzgerald is referring to Sun Yat-sen as this awakened leader, a corresponding awakened leader for farmers is found in the Farmers' Association's Director and creator of the "Farmers' Friend", Ma You-yue, who worked to benefit Taiwanese farmers through collaboration with the Nationalist regime. He personified not only the Farmers' Association but also the relationship between the government and farmers. That is, he represented the interests of the state to farmers, and the interests of farmers to the state. Finally, while the journal served as a tool for Nationalist state penetration, there was limited space for criticism of the regime, so long as it focused on specific policies, avoided politics and was not directly pointed at the regime.

Through the pages of the "Farmers' Friend", this thesis seeks to provide some answers to larger questions regarding rural farmers' relationship with the Nationalist government. Specifically, how did the nationalist party view Taiwanese farmers and landlords, and in return, how did these farmers and landlords perceive the recently arriving refugee regime? While this study only partially addresses these questions, it does help provide understanding regarding Nationalist views towards Taiwanese farmers and their efforts to transform them into citizens according to their ideals.

By looking at the relationship between the Nationalist government and farmers through farming literature this thesis moves beyond other scholarly literature on this

period. Generally speaking, most scholarship on Taiwan during the 1950s tends to center around economic and social change and farmers are only discussed in relation to those two topics and usually in reference to land reforms or the Farmers' Association. Rarely do scholarly works deal with the relationship farmers had with the government. This thesis hopes to shed greater light upon this relationship by discussing how the journal the "Farmers' Friend" was a tool for shaping citizenship for the government while also providing farmers with a limited forum to express their views.

RURAL CONTEXT IN THE 1950s

Land Reforms

Land reforms in Taiwan began in 1949 with Rent Reduction, and continued with the policies of Sale of Public Land (1951) and Land-to-Tiller (carried out in 1953). The first of these policies set a limit on the amount of rent landlords could charge their tenants, capping it at 37.5%. For this reason, Rent Reduction is often known as the 37.5% Rent Reduction. It also required written contracts between landlords and tenants and forbade landlords from forcing tenants to pay arbitrary costs such as rents for houses on tenanted land or water rights. The Sale of Public Land enabled farmers to buy some of the farmland confiscated from the Japanese. The third policy, Land-to-Tiller is arguably the most important of the three. This policy placed a limit on the amount of land a household could own at about three hectares, anything more than this was compulsorily sold to the government who in turn sold it to the tenants farming it.

Initiated by Taiwan's governor general Chen Cheng, who later became the Premier of the Republic of China on Taiwan, these policies brought to fruition earlier

ideals put forth by Sun Yat-sen in his “Three Principles of the People” which hoped to equalize land rights.⁴ The Nationalists were especially keen to implement land reform policies in order to preempt the communists from using land reforms as a point of entry into Taiwan’s countryside, much like they had on mainland China.⁵

Scholarly works that address land reforms generally either provide an overview of how these reforms were carried out or look at them from an economic perspective. The former approach, which includes works by Chen Cheng and Tang Hui-sun,⁶ usually praises the reforms, touting their success and crediting them with setting the stage for Taiwan’s economic takeoff. Both of these works outline the process through which the reforms were carried out as well as providing statistics showing how agriculture improved as a result. In both cases, these works, especially Chen Cheng’s, are very careful to present land reforms in a positive light.

Works which take an economic approach usually set out to show how land reforms were not really the panacea they often claimed to be. Examples of this type include, Samuel Tseng and John Chen. Their articles claim that land reforms did little or nothing to improve agricultural production. Tseng argues that counter to popular

⁴ Cheng Chen, *Land Reform in Taiwan* (Taipei: China Publishing Company, 1961). 10.

⁵ Ibid. 47, 48.

⁶ Hui-sun Tang, *Land Reform in Free China* (Taipei: China Engraving and Printing Works, 1954).

claims; the Land-to-Tiller land reform did not boost rice production⁷ while Chen concludes that land reform resulted in suboptimal output of rice, labor and fertilizer. Chen does agree, however, with the larger argument that land reforms spurred industrialization because real estate was no longer seen as an attractive investment.⁸

Unfortunately, other than mentioning that there were a number of disputes between landlords and tenants when implementing Rent Reduction,⁹ both types of these scholarly works do little to express how the people responded to these agricultural policies and fail to mention the relationship between the Farmers' Association and the government at all. To get a clearer sense of this interaction, it is necessary to turn to scholars who examine social patterns in rural Taiwan and focus their discussion upon the Farmers' Associations.

Farmers' Associations

The first farmers' organization appeared in the Sanchia Township of Taipei County in 1900¹⁰ and by 1908 there were sixteen such organizations.¹¹ In 1909 the

⁷ Samuel Hsin-yu Tseng, "Using the 1953 Taiwanese Land Reform to Estimate the Effect of Land Ownership Transfer on Productivity," (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2004).

⁸ John-Ren Chen, "The Effects of Land Reform on the Rice Sector and Economic Development in Taiwan," *World Development* 22, no. 11 (1994).

⁹ Tang, 50, 51.; Chen, *Land Reform in Taiwan*. Chpt. 2.

¹⁰ Huang Chun-chieh dates the creation of this farmers' association as 1899. Chun-chieh Huang,

Japanese colonial government co-opted these organizations with the “Regulations of Farmers' Associations in Taiwan”, which created a legal foundation for this type of organization.¹² From that point on, Japanese officials attempted to control Taiwan’s farming organizations by establishing local farmers’ associations. According to the *Farmers' Friend*, the farmers’ associations during this time were partially controlled by the people and partially controlled by the government.¹³ Yet it appears that the government had much more control over these organizations than the people did since they could appoint local chief officers to be membership representatives and the county

“Transformation of Farmers' Social Consciousness in Postwar Taiwan,” in *Cultural Change in Postwar Taiwan*, ed. Charlesevan Harrell Stafford, Huang Chun-chieh (Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford: Westview Press, 1994). 126.

¹¹ *The Reorganization of Farmers' Associations in Taiwan: 臺灣省農會之改組* Taiwan Provincial Farm Government Report: 台灣省農政報告 (Taipei: Taiwan. Nong lin ting.; Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction 1950). 2.

¹² Ibid. 2.

¹³ “公益團體歟？營利團體歟？(Is This a Public Welfare Organization or a Private Benefit Organization?),” *Farmers' Friend* 1953. 4.; Gallin makes a similar statement as well. Bernard Gallin, *Hsin Hsing, Taiwan: A Chinese Village in Change* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966). 69.; The claim that the farmers’ associations were partially controlled by the people is questionable at best. A 1950 book discussing the reorganization of the farmers’ association published by the Taiwan Farmers’ Association states, “the Farmers' Associations in Taiwan can be regarded as a government sponsored agency at the very beginning up to the present time, and they were far from being in the theoretical condition of “by the people, for the people, and of the people.”” Furthermore, these farmers’ associations were often dominated by landlords, especially early on, such as in the Taichung Ting Farmers' Association which limited membership to landlords.” *The Reorganization of Farmers' Associations in Taiwan: 臺灣省農會之改組* 3, 7.

magistrate to be the organization chairman, thus ensuring that the farmers' associations were sympathetic to the colonial government's goals.¹⁴

These organizations were primarily concerned with agricultural issues related to rice and sugar, yet they were not the only agricultural organizations on the island. As Taiwan's agricultural economy changed, other agricultural related organizations such as cooperative societies and agricultural production small groups began to appear.¹⁵ In the 1920s there were also farming organizations who opposed Japanese colonialism and had links to communism. Bessac writes that these farmers' associations were revolutionary and oppressed by the Japanese, while what he terms the "Associations of Agriculture" were the official farming organization of the Japanese colonial government.¹⁶ Similarly, Huang notes an organization he calls the "Association of

¹⁴ *The Reorganization of Farmers' Associations in Taiwan: 臺灣省農會之改組* 3.; Ma You-yue 馬有岳, "台灣農會的演變與特質 (Taiwan Farmers' Association's Evolvment and Special Characteristics)," 農友 (*Farmers' Friend*) 1952. 6.; The government could also control the farmers' associations financially by subsidizing them. At its highest point, these subsidies reached ¥235,840 in 1922 and from 1930 on remained steady at about ¥100,000 per year. Furthermore, the colonial government could control the farmers' associations through legal means, such as through the previously mentioned "Regulations of Farmers' Associations in Taiwan" of 1909. Not only did this law provide the legal foundation for farmers' associations, it provided that the local associations could compel those engaged in agricultural activities to join and pay membership fees. *The Reorganization of Farmers' Associations in Taiwan: 臺灣省農會之改組* 5.; Gallin describes the membership fees as buying stocks into the local farmers' association. Gallin. 69.

¹⁵ 馬有岳. 6.

¹⁶ Frank B. Bessac, *An Example of Social Change in Taiwan Related to Land Reform*, ed. Carling Malouf,

Taiwan Farmers” which he claims “spoke out against capitalistic enterprises and provided assistance for local opposition to the Japanese. This was the first noteworthy expression of Taiwan farmers’ group consciousness prior to the Kuomintang takeover.”¹⁷

Following the 1920s, the strength of farmers’ associations waned due to competition with cooperative societies. These societies were more engaged in village economic activities than farmers’ associations and they increasingly became involved in agricultural extension activities that were previously the domain of farmers’ associations, such as agricultural education. For these reasons, cooperative societies came to be considered more important than farmers’ associations.¹⁸ In 1944, Japan consolidated these two organizations under the “Taiwan Agriculture Association Act” in order to mobilize resources for war.¹⁹ This act also extended the Farmers’ Association down to the township level whereas previously it existed only at the provincial and county levels.²⁰

University of Montana. Contributions to Anthropology,; No. 1; Variation: Contributions to Anthropology ;; No. 1 (Publication Missoula Dept of Anthropology University of Montana, 1967). 13.

¹⁷ Huang. 114.

¹⁸ *The Reorganization of Farmers' Associations in Taiwan: 臺灣省農會之改組* 6.

¹⁹ 馬有岳. 6.

²⁰ *The Reorganization of Farmers' Associations in Taiwan: 臺灣省農會之改組* 19, 20.

When Taiwan reverted back to China, the Nationalist government originally intended to maintain the same structure for the Farmers' Association, only to suddenly separate the Farmers' Association and Cooperative Societies.²¹ Most people opposed the split which was mostly in name only, as the two organizations continued to function largely as they did prior to 1946 with both organizations being run by the same local leadership. This left the Farmers' Association at a disadvantage since the cooperative societies focused upon agricultural business while the Farmers' Associations were limited in their access to funds.²² Upon the recommendation of the Sino/American Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction (JCRR), the two organizations were officially reunited in 1949.²³

The final major change to the Farmers' Association occurred with its reorganization in 1953. This reorganization differentiated between regular and

²¹ The reason for doing so likely relates to Chen Dong-shen's argument that both the Japanese and Nationalist governments sought to weaken Taiwanese society respective to their own power and prevent Taiwan from developing indigenous economic or political institutions. Dung-Sheng Chen, "Taiwan's Social Changes in the Patterns of Social Solidarity in the 20th Century," *The China Quarterly* 165 (2001): 72. Seeing the Farmers' Association organization as a political organization and the Social Cooperatives as an economic one, the Nationalists wanted to break them apart in order to prevent them from consolidating too much power.

²² *The Reorganization of Farmers' Associations in Taiwan: 臺灣省農會之改組* 26, 27.

²³ According to Ma You-yue, this merger was to promote democracy (馬有岳, 6.) yet Lasson argues this was done so that "Chiang Kai-shek could control both the food supply and the countryside (Aksel De Lasson, *A Restudy of the Taiwan Farmers' Associations*, Herodot ed. (Aachen 1989). 11.)."

associate members, defining regular members as those who generated half of their income from agricultural activities.²⁴ They were to make up two thirds of the organization's membership. They also held voting rights and could serve as elected officers. Associate members on the other hand, consisted of those whose income did not come primarily through agricultural activities. They could not vote and could only serve in leadership positions as advisors.²⁵

Scholarly works dealing with the Farmers' Associations, such as those by Frank Bessac, Aksel De Lasson, and T. H. Shen²⁶, are often descriptive in nature, laying out the organization's activities and structure. While these studies, especially Bessac's work, help to explain the relationship the Farmers' Association had with the government, they still leave gaps in our understanding of how this relationship carried over to farmers at large and fail to explain the social dynamics between the government, the Farmers' Association and those in rural communities. To get a better understanding of this relationship, one must turn to Bernard Gallin, Benedict Stavis, and Martin Yang.

In his anthropological study, Bernard Gallin describes how land reforms

²⁴ "改進台灣省各級農會暫行辦法實施細則 (Improve Each Level of Taiwan's Farmers' Association Temporary Law Implementation Details)," 農友 (*Farmers' Friend*) 1953. 34.

²⁵ Ibid. 34-36.

²⁶ T. H. Shen, *The Sino-American Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction: Twenty Years of Cooperation for Agricultural Development* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1970).

affected tenant/landlord relations. He explains that written contracts between landlords and tenants as required by the 37.5% Rent Reduction policy, changed the relationship between these groups to a strictly business relationship, where tenants no longer needed to maintain good personal relationships to secure their right to till the land.²⁷

Gallin also addresses the Farmers' Association's confusing relationship with the government as a co-opted organization, both independent of and supervised by the government.²⁸ Huang Chun-chieh notes this relationship as well, writing, "the enactment of land reform in the 1950s represented another such infiltration of governmental power into farm villages, reshaping their economic order while knitting together "state" and "society.""²⁹ What Huang fails to acknowledge however, is that government co-optation of the Farmers' Association was not merely a one-way, top down relationship. Rather, as Stavis writes, it was a multi-directional relationship in which farmers in the Farmers' Association sought a semblance of a political voice and received, at least to an extent, an opportunity for political participation.³⁰

²⁷ Gallin. 91-96.

²⁸ Gallin. 70.

²⁹ Huang. 120.

³⁰ Benedict Stavis, *Rural Local Governance and Agricultural Development in Taiwan* (Ithaca: Rural Development Committee Center for International Studies Cornell University, 1974). 103.

Finally, Martin Yang attempts to bring together a study of tenant and landlord relations and of attitudes towards politics by carrying out a nationwide survey to see what people thought of land reforms ten years after they were enacted.³¹ Unfortunately, at times, the results of his survey are difficult to follow and even appear contradictory. However, it does provide some understanding of how farmers and landlords viewed the government and the Farmers' Association following land reforms. Yang points out that generally, farmers were initially grateful to the government for land reforms. However, some of them later conceded that land ownership was not all it was made out to be. As for landlords, they resented the land reforms yet this resentment decreased over time for some.³²

Muddying the Waters

The 228 Incident in 1947 cast a dark shadow over the island and complicated the relationship between the Nationalist government and the people of Taiwan.³³ What

He also mentions the role that the Farmers' Association played in developing political careers and rural leadership training, noting that most Farmers' Association general managers were members of the KMT and were nominated by the party.

Stavis. 99.

³¹ Martin M.C. Yang, *Socio-Economic Results of Land Reform in Taiwan* (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1970).

³² Ibid. 163-67.

³³ The phrase muddying the waters refers not only to the manner in which the 228 Incident and White

began as a riot in Taipei over a woman being arrested for selling illegal cigarettes quickly spread into an island wide insurrection. It concluded nearly a month later when reinforcements arrived on the island and wrested back control.³⁴ The shadow this event created darkened throughout the 1950s due to what has become known as the “White Terror.” Beginning just after the arrival of the Nationalist government in early 1950, Chiang Kai-shek imposed Martial Law on the island, sending thousands of individuals accused of opposing the Nationalist regime to be executed or imprisoned.³⁵

Terror complicated the relationship between the people of Taiwan and the government, but also to the Chinese expression, “To join the muddled,” meaning a person losing his purity through joining a corrupt organization. In 1950s Taiwan, this phrase was used to denote a native Taiwanese who joined or collaborated with the KMT. Tehpen Tsai, *Elegy of Sweet Potatoes: Stories of Taiwan's White Terror* (Upland, Ca.; Taipei, Taiwan: Taiwan Publishing Co., 2002). 21.

³⁴ Two excellent studies on the 228 Incident include: Ramon H. Myers Lai Tse-han, Wei Wou, *A Tragic Beginning: The Taiwan Uprising of February 28, 1947* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).; and the fourth chapter of: Steven E Phillips, *Between Assimilation and Independence : The Taiwanese Encounter Nationalist China, 1945-1950* (Stanford Stanford University Press, 2003).

³⁵ The White Terror was at its height in the 1950s, yet it continued for more than thirty years, officially ending with the end of Martial Law in 1986. Because of the close connection these two events had to the KMT, they have only recently begun to be thoroughly explored. One way this is currently being researched is through looking at the writings and films of Taiwan in search of messages regarding 228 and White Terror to gain an understanding of how people in Taiwan perceived these events. For more on this research, see: Sylvia Li-chun Lin, *Representing Atrocity in Taiwan: The 2/28 Incident and White Terror in Fiction and Film* (New York, West Sussex: Columbia University Press, 2007).; Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang, *Literary Culture in Taiwan: Martial Law to Market Law* (New York, Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press, 2004).; Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang, *Modernism and the Nativist Resistance: Contemporary Chinese Fiction from Taiwan* (Durham, London: Duke University Press, 1993). There are also a growing number of memoirs, often called prison literature which recount Taiwanese experience during the White Terror period.

Steven Philips' work sheds light on how these events affected the relationship between the government and the people of Taiwan. Philips argues that the 228 Incident and "White Terror" events changed the political landscape by eliminating the traditional leadership, causing them to: flee the island; decide not to get involved in politics; or finally, seek political opportunity wherever they could find it. In this case it meant joining up with the Nationalist government, walking a fine line between supporting the Nationalist party line and promoting local Taiwanese interests from within.³⁶ While seeking to help Taiwan from within, these men also became models for the Nationalist citizen by going along with Nationalist policies. It was through such men that the Nationalist government sought to sway the views of ordinary citizens and gather support for their cause, thereby creating a modern Nationalist citizen. Ma You-yue was one of these men.

The Tireless Old Stallion: Ma You-yue

Born in Xin Zhu and raised in Hua-lian, Ma worked first as a farmer and later managed a sugar refinery.³⁷ Seeing the value of education, especially science and

³⁶ Phillips. 115-139.

³⁷ The biography of Ma You-yue is gleaned from several sources found on the internet. Among them are: A short biographical history of important individuals from Hua-lian, found at: <http://eng6.swcb.gov.tw/wuhe/manager/down/file/第十一篇%20%20人物篇.pdf> Available online: Oct.

economics, Ma was convinced of the need for modernization. He was also critical of the poor treatment of Taiwanese during Japan's colonial rule. This criticism earned him a prison term of 136 days.³⁸ Following World War Two, Ma became involved in politics but was also disappointed by the new Nationalist government. He participated in the 228 Incident as a representative of Hua-lian County which earned him another short stint in prison. Upon his release, Ma again became active in politics as the Director of Taiwan's Provincial Farmers' Association and Hua-lian's first elected representative to Taiwan's Provincial Assembly as a member of the KMT.

Ma You-yue played a particularly important role in citizenship creation among farmers. As the director of the Farmers' Association from 1950-54, and creator of the "Farmers' Friend," Ma held a great influence among farmers throughout the province.

3, 2008; 臺灣歷史辭典(Taiwan's Historical Dictionary):

<http://nrch.cca.gov.tw/ccahome/website/site20/contents/010/cca220003-li-wpkbhisdict002259-0680-u.xml> Available online: Oct. 3, 2008; The webpage for the Taiwan Provincial Consultative Council has a brief biography of Ma at:

http://www.tpa.gov.tw/Big5/Councilor/Councilor_view.asp?id=696&cid=2&urlID=20 Available online: Oct. 3, 2008. Note that the Taiwan Provincial Consultative Council evolved out of the Taiwan Provincial Assembly, of which Ma You-yue was an elected member; and a webpage article from 新台灣新聞週刊 (New Taiwan News Weekly) discussing the 228 Incident, found at:

<http://www.newtaiwan.com.tw/bulletinview.jsp?bulletinid=78251> Available online: Oct. 3, 2008.

³⁸ <http://eng6.swcb.gov.tw/wuhe/manager/down/file/第十一篇%20%20人物篇.pdf> Available online: Oct. 3, 2008. 7.

His own personal history also served as a real life model of the transformation into the modern citizen for all of Taiwan's farmers, exemplifying the change from a supporter of Taiwan's "self rule" into a Nationalist citizen as a member of the KMT. Ma hoped to use his status and experience to help farmers in Taiwan become modern Chinese citizens, a task he sought to accomplish through the "Farmers' Friend." Not only was he the creator of the journal, he was also a regular contributor to it and was the journal's distributor. As such, he, along with the Nationalist party, oversaw the journal and was the person responsible for the citizenship creation messages found within its contents.

The "Farmers' Friend"

On the surface, the "Farmers' Friend" was a journal that sought to educate farmers, to help them be more effective in their labor and make them productive citizens of a modern state. Ma and the journals' publishers not only sought to provide a garden where farmers could express their views, they wanted to create a journal that would appeal to the people of Taiwan, especially the farmers. Holding up the American magazine, "Readers Digest" as a model to follow, they hoped their journal

would one day become known to every household.³⁹ This intention was never fully realized in this early period for several reasons.

One reason for the journal's failure to penetrate every household was due to Taiwan's colonial heritage. As a result of fifty years of Japanese rule, which required Taiwanese to learn Japanese, the majority of the people in Taiwan were illiterate in the Chinese language and incompetent in speaking Mandarin,⁴⁰ thus unable to read the journal. Publishers of the journal attempted to offset this drawback by simplifying the journal's contents as much as possible, constantly reminding writers to keep farmers in mind when submitting articles for publication. Given the overall level of illiteracy, this strategy did not likely work well.⁴¹ To deal with this problem, the Farmers' Association tried to help farmers understand the contents of the journal through radio broadcasts and discussion lectures.⁴²

³⁹ Ma You-yue 馬有岳, "農友的理想與做法 (Farmers' Friend's Ideals and Methods: Opening Statement)," 農友 (*Farmers' Friend*) 1951. 2.

⁴⁰ Phillips. 69.

⁴¹ Gallin notes that as late as 1957 most adult villagers were illiterate. He also mentions that while primary school graduates could read simple Chinese texts, this task soon became difficult for those who did not continue their education due to lack of practice. Gallin. 196-97.

⁴² "請重視農村廣播事業 (Please Emphasize Village Broadcast Industry)," 農友 (*Farmers' Friend*) 1952. 3.

Another reason was that the journal's circulation was simply too small. In 1953, the Farmers' Association claimed to have 763,567 household members⁴³ yet a monthly circulation of only 6,000 copies.⁴⁴ That comes out to less than one issue for every 120 households. Therefore, even if farmers could read its contents, distribution of the journal was too small to reach the public at large. Furthermore, despite the wish to reach all farmers, the journal's intended audience was really local Farmers' Association leaders.⁴⁵ This is suggested in part by the fact that monthly circulation roughly corresponded with the total number of Farmers' Association small groups, township Farmers' Associations and county Farmers' Associations, totaling 5,403.⁴⁶ It also helps

⁴³ Liu Shi-chang 劉世昌, "農民的大事 (Farmers' Great Work)," *農友 (Farmers' Friend)* 1953. 6. There is some confusion regarding these numbers. A report just a few months earlier listed the number of farming households as 661,125.; "公地應繼續放領 (Sale of Public Land Should Continue)," *農友 (Farmers' Friend)* 1953. 4; Since Farmers' Association membership was limited to only one person per household (usually the patriarch) who was to represent the whole household in the organization, either membership statistics are overestimated by 100,000 households or the farming families are underestimated by 100,000 households. The earlier number of 763,567 farm families is perhaps more accurate since it roughly corresponds to Tang's figure of 725,046 farm families in 1952. Tang, 288. There are also some discrepancies regarding total farm population as well. Tang says there were nearly 4.5 million farmers in 1952 while an article in the "Farmers' Friend" lists this number at 4.1 million in 1953. Tang, 288.; "公地應繼續放領 (Sale of Public Land Should Continue)." 4.

⁴⁴ Ma You-yue 馬有岳, "民國四十二年的希望與努力 (1953's Hopes and Diligence)," *農友 (Farmers' Friend)* 1953. 7.

⁴⁵ This argument comes in part from a phone conversation and e-mail correspondence the author held with current Farmers' Association leadership. dated September 27, 29, 2008.

⁴⁶ 劉世昌. 6.

explain why the journal puts so much focus on content like Farmers' Association Monthly Records, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Government Directives Compilation, and Tax Explanation when the publishers knew these sections were unpopular and difficult to understand.⁴⁷ Inclusion of this type of information was meant specifically for local Farmers' Association leaders, to help them know of recent activities, both within the organization and the government that might affect them. While local leaders were the journal's target audience, the publishers also wanted the everyday farmer to become familiar with it, making local leaders responsible for spreading the contents of the journal to farmers in his locale. In this manner, the Farmers' Association became co-cultivators along with the Nationalist government in growing Nationalist citizens.

A third obstacle was the government itself. Following the 228 Incident, the government strictly censored the media, ensuring that the message provided in the journal complied with, and was not overly critical of the Nationalist party. Furthermore, because the government banned Japanese, the journal had to be published in Chinese, which effectively limited the number of individuals who could access the

⁴⁷ Xiang: 陳香 Chen, "My Ideas and Hopes for "Farmers' Friend: 我對農友的意見與期望," *Farmers' Friend* 1952. 18.

contents of the journal for themselves. Essentially, the government controlled the journal, even while allowing the perception that the Farmers' Association was the organization that oversaw it and provided the voice for farmers. The government allowed this voice to exist, so long as it remained within the allowed limits.

WHO ARE THE FARMERS' FRIENDS?

*Previous agriculture policy was imperialistic, with Japan using Taiwan to provide for their needs. Now the agriculture policy is different, seeking to modernize, improve the lives of farmers and their status, increase production and improve management.*⁴⁸

In part, the effort to create a new citizen farmer was done through the Farmers' Association and its journal, the "Farmers' Friend. The name, "Farmers' Friend," is multilayered and serves as a metaphor of what the Nationalist government was trying to accomplish through the Farmers' Association. It also begs the question, "Who were the farmers' friends?"

The Farmers' Association: The Farmers' Bridge to the Government

Led by Ma You-yue, the Farmers' Association worked hard to convince farmers that they were the farmers' mediator with the government and sought to promote the farmers' interests. Maintaining this impression was very important, for the sake of both the Farmers' Association and the government. By claiming to be the voice of

⁴⁸ "發刊詞 (Opening Statements)." 1.

farmers, the organization could also argue they were providing farmers with an arena for political participation. This was especially important considering that the government was dominated by “outsiders” who fled the mainland. These leaders had no connection to the land, or the people of Taiwan and although democratic elections were beginning to be allowed at the local level, such positions were mostly administrative in nature and local leadership had little or no opportunity to formulate policy. The Farmers' Association, on the other hand, due to its connection to the land and its pervasiveness throughout the island, created a space where farmers could hold some modicum of political power, or at least have an opportunity to voice their concerns. For these reasons, the Farmers' Association's assistance was critical for Nationalist state penetration in rural areas.

Ma You-yue, in particular, was able to use the Nationalist's need for local expertise to his advantage. Due to his position within the Farmers' Association, he was able to present himself as the personification of the organization and as a bridge between the farmers and the government. As a former farmer, he could connect with the concerns of farmers around the island while as a politician, he could present these concerns to higher levels of government administration. Furthermore, Ma served as an example of what could be achieved, both individually and for the island, when one

cooperated with the Nationalist government for the benefit of Taiwan.

The Farmers' Association wanted to unite farmers in order to create a group identity. To do so, the organization had to present the image of being the farmers' friends and distance itself from rumors of corruption and factionalism.⁴⁶ In reference to the Farmers' Association's reputation, Stavis writes,

Some feel that the farmers' association is simply a business that sells them fertilizer, seeds, and pesticides. Others are more hostile, seeing it as a corrupt group that exploits them, collecting taxes and making other charges to fund huge parties at places of prostitution. In other places, however, the farmers' association is considered an organization that serves important needs of the farmers.⁴⁷

Through its magazine, radio broadcasts and instructional lectures, the organization fought hard to rectify these problems, correct the rumors and present an image of an organization by farmers, for farmers, whose mission was to improve farmers' lives and protect their rights.⁴⁸ To promote this message, the Farmers' Association relied on local leadership to provide an example to all farmers. For this reason, it was necessary to build up the quality of their leaders, instructing them in modern agricultural methods as well as in what it meant to be a modern Nationalist citizen. The Farmers

⁴⁶ 朱石山,「民國四十二年,希望與勤儉」,《1953's Hopes and Diligence》,6。

⁴⁷ Stavis, 98。

⁴⁸ 「全省農會同仁鑒 (Advise Entire Province Farmers' Association Co-Workers Letter)」, 農友 (Farmers Friend) 1951, 9。

Association provided this image and instruction through the "Farmers' Friend".

The "Agricultural Situation" section within the journal helped to accomplish this task. This section was actually three sections in one: "Farmers' Association Actions"; "Agricultural Situation of Each Area"; and "World Agricultural Situation." Essentially, they reported agricultural news throughout Taiwan and the world. In reporting such activities, the journal highlighted the Farmers' Association's and government's efforts to improve farmers' lives. Helping to boost the impression that both were working hard for farmers' benefit.⁵² Meanwhile, reporting on global agriculture, particularly the United States, provided an example of modern farmers that Taiwan could emulate.

The Farmers' Association wanted farmers to see it as their spokesman, providing the farmers' voice and expressing their needs and concerns to the Nationalist government.⁵³ This was done through editorials and, during the first year, letters to the

⁵² One noteworthy example from this section showing the government and Farmers' Association's efforts to provide the impression of protecting the interests of farmers comes from the case of Li Jia-cheng. Li was a tenant farmer who hung himself in protest over mistreatment by his landlord. It stirred up a wave of interest in tenant rights and even the provincial governor, Wu Guo-zhen became involved in the case to ensure it was satisfactorily resolved. "佃農李家成自縊 (Farm Tenant Li Jia-Cheng Hangs Himself)," *農友 (Farmers' Friend)* 1951. 18-21.

⁵³ "加強農會組織應從小組做起 (to Strengthen Farmers' Association Organization, Should Begin with Small Groups)," *農友 (Farmers' Friend)* 1952. 19.

editor which raised awareness of agricultural issues. Within these sections, farmers and the Farmers' Association had an opportunity to critique and ask for more benefits from the government. The Nationalist government allowed this critique as long as it remained focused on particular policies and not the party.

Mostly, these critiques dealt with financial issues. For example, farmers complained that they received no benefit from land reforms because of price inequalities between agricultural products and nonagricultural products. They argued that inflation of nonagricultural product prices quickly swallowed any surplus income they received from Rent Reduction.⁵⁴

Another common complaint was the high interest on loans. According to one writer from Hua-lian, farmers lived in a perpetual state of debt because they could not sell their crops for enough to repay earlier loans used to pay for seeds and fertilizer. As a result, farmers were required to take new loans to pay off the old ones at exorbitant interest rates.⁵⁵ Due to this difficulty, farmers asked the government to help provide low interest loans, thereby helping reduce the burden placed upon their shoulders.

⁵⁴ Gao Xiong County Farmers 高雄縣農友, "農友生活未見改善 (Farmers' Lives Have Not Seen an Improvement)," 農友 (*Farmers' Friend*) 1951. 19.

⁵⁵ "高利貸猖獗 (High Interest Loans Run Rampant)," 農友 (*Farmers' Friend*) 1951. 16.

Occasionally, the Farmers' Association would expand upon farmers' initial complaints by writing editorials to further clarify an issue and bring more attention to it. In articulating farmers' concerns, the Farmers' Association served as the farmers' advocate in persuading the government to assist farmers. This occurred when global sugar cane prices dropped relative to rice prices. Farmers' initially expressed this problem in the journal's "Farmers' Voices" section.⁵⁶ This concern later became an often discussed topic as the drop in world sugar cane prices created a disincentive to continue growing sugar cane. The Farmers' Association helped the government understand the seriousness of this issue. If farmers switched to cultivating rice (which made sense because prices were now equal yet three rice crops could be grown in the same amount of time it took to grow one sugar cane crop) then the Taiwan Sugar Corporation would not have enough sugar cane to produce sugar and would therefore lose its world markets. Exacerbating this concern was Taiwan's reliance on exporting sugar to build up its foreign reserves, which were needed to prepare to retake China. The "Farmers' Friend" called attention to this issue, encouraging farmers to stay the course and not switch over to rice in search of short term profits. In the meantime, the

⁵⁶ "標準牌價 (the Standard Market Price)," 農友 (*Farmers' Friend*) 1951. 19.

government made efforts to shore up the price of sugar cane in order to maintain an incentive to grow sugar.⁵⁷

The Farmers' Association would also use the space provided in the "Farmers Friend" to critique the government for their own purposes. The strongest of these critiques appeared in a series of editorials throughout 1953.⁵⁸ These editorials, which occurred from June to September of 1953, pushed the limits of what the government would allow. Essentially, the Farmers' Association complained that the government treated them unfairly and did not provide them with enough funding. Part of this complaint stemmed from the government's practice of taxing the Farmers' Association for storing fertilizer for the government and underpaying for services the organization rendered for the government.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ "糖米比較問題 (Sugar-Rice Comparative Price Problem)," 農友 (*Farmers' Friend*) 1952: 3.

⁵⁸ "公益團體嗎? 福利團體嗎? (Is This a Public Welfare Organization or a Private Benefit Organization?)," 農友 (*Farmers' Friend*) 1953: 4; "對改組農會的希望 (Hopes for Reforming the Farmers' Association)," 農友 (*Farmers' Friend*) 1953: 4; "論農會的課稅問題 (Discussing the Farmers' Associations Tax Problem)," 農友 (*Farmers' Friend*) 1953: 4; "改組農會希望政府趕快訂立農會輔導機構 (within Reorganization, Hope the Government Quickly Establishes a Subsidy System)," 農友 (*Farmers' Friend*) 1953: 4.

⁵⁹ "論農會的課稅問題 (Discussing the Farmers' Associations Tax Problem)," 4; "改組農會希望政府趕快訂立農會輔導機構 (within Reorganization, Hope the Government Quickly Establishes a Subsidy System)," 4.

These complaints touched sensitive areas in two ways. First, they drew a comparison between the Nationalist government and the Japanese government, saying that the Japanese always provided funding for the organization.⁶⁰ As we shall see, the Nationalist government was particularly sensitive to such a comparison and tried very hard to impress upon Taiwan the superiority of Chinese culture and the Nationalist regime. The second sensitive remark implied that the government intentionally prevented the Farmers' Association from reaching its full potential by allowing a number of different government departments direct the organization yet requiring none of them to be responsive to their requests for help.⁶¹ These remarks hit a little too close to home for the Nationalist government and after four months of complaining that the government did not take care of the Farmers' Association, such complaints did not appear in the journal again for that year.

While these editorials and letters may not have always received a response from the government, they at least helped provide the impression that the Farmers' Association was listening, understood their concerns and would work through the

⁶⁰ "公益團體歟？營利團體歟？(Is This a Public Welfare Organization or a Private Benefit Organization?)." 4.

⁶¹ "改組聲中希望政府趕快設立農會輔導機構 (within Reorganization, Hope the Government Quickly Establishes a Subsidy System)." 4.

government to resolve them. They also provide evidence of the "Farmers' Friend" creating a space where farmers could make their thoughts heard, however limited that space might have been.

Finally, the "Farmers' Friend" would remind farmers just how important the Farmers' Association was to them. Without the organization, they argued, not only would farmers lack a voice, they would have missed out on political and economic rights. They were quick to claim success in representing farmers, claiming that, "The Farmers' Association is the soul of farmers."⁶² In this way, farmers began "relying on the Farmers' Friend to represent them" and to "think of it as theirs, as their friend."⁶³

The Nationalist Government: Protector of Farmers' Interests

The Nationalist government also sought to project themselves as the farmers' friends. This was no easy task as the 228 Incident and ongoing "White Terror" purges did not exactly endear the Nationalist government to the people of Taiwan. However, realizing they must gain the trust of farmers as a source of legitimacy,⁶⁴ the Nationalists

⁶² Liu Shi-chang 劉世昌, "農民期待的農業政策 (the Agriculture Policy Eagerly Awaited for by Farmers)," *農友 (Farmers' Friend)* 1952: 4. Also see: 劉世昌, "農民的大事 (Farmers' Great Work)," 6.

⁶³ Chen, "My Ideas and Hopes for 'Farmers' Friend: 我對農友的意見與期望," 18.

⁶⁴ 劉世昌, "農民期待的農業政策 (the Agriculture Policy Eagerly Awaited for by Farmers)," 4.

were acutely aware of farmers' importance to their survival. Furthermore, since the majority of the population was farmers, they constituted the government's primary sources of income through taxes, food supplies and future soldiers if and when the opportunity to retake China presented itself. Therefore, it was crucial to appear as though they looked out for the farmers' interests.⁶⁵

The Farmers' Association helped the government develop this impression through articles within the "Farmers' Friend." Like the Farmers' Association, the Nationalist government was very quick to point out what they did, or were in the process of doing for farmers, such as land reforms. For example, the government highlighted the land reforms' intended effect of freeing farmers from landlords' exploitation. They argued that limiting land ownership through the Land-to-Tiller land reform would improve standards of living, make people freer, allow farmers to participate in democratic self government, and transition Taiwan from an agricultural society to an industrial one.⁶⁶ Whether or not it actually accomplished this goal, as already noted, is debatable. However, it did succeed in some measurable ways. Land-

⁶⁵ Ibid. 4. See also: Stavis. 5.

⁶⁶ "實施限田政策 (Implementing Land Limitation Policy)," *農友 (Farmers' Friend)* 1952: 3. Also see Stavis for mention of the Nationalists using land reforms to build support. Stavis. 35.

to-Tiller decreased tenancy from thirty-nine to eleven percent⁶⁷ and Martin Yang reports that eighty percent of farmers still looked favorably upon land reforms ten years after their implementation.⁶⁸

In short, the government would point out, and take credit for, any agricultural successes they could, whether it be an increase in production or improvement in farmers' standard of living. They were especially gleeful to announce that since 1950 rice production had surpassed rice production in any year under Japanese rule,⁶⁹ thereby justifying claims that their rule was superior to Japan's.

While the government touted its successes, it played the role of a parent rearing children. The Nationalists promoted themselves as the guiding light of farmers, without which farmers would not know what to do and could not prosper. In a Farmers' Day speech made by Premier Chen Cheng, after stating Chiang Kai-shek's deep concern for farmers, he says, "Only through thorough implementation of the President's leadership can there be an increase in production, prospering villages and

⁶⁷ While the statistics do not exactly match up, several sources make this claim, see: Chen, *Land Reform in Taiwan*. 83.; Tang. 138.; Peter Chen-main Wang, "A Bastion Created, a Regime Reformed, an Economy Reengineered, 1949-1970," in *Taiwan: A New History*, ed. Murry A. Rubinstein (Armonk, New York, London: M.E. Sharpe, 1999). 325.

⁶⁸ Yang. 137, 139.

⁶⁹ Lin Shi-nan 林世南, "農民節感言 (Farmer's Day Words of Thanks)," 農友 (*Farmers' Friend*) 1952. 14.

improvement in the lives of farmers..."⁷⁰ At times, this parental language addressed farmers as teenagers who were constantly asking for help yet were ungrateful for what they received. In this context, the Nationalists hoped to instill a sense of responsibility and self reliance among farmers. This was especially true since at this point in time, the Nationalists spent much of their energy and resources preparing to retake China.⁷¹

The Nationalists also promoted themselves as defenders, not only of Taiwan's farmers, but of landlords as well. This was mainly done by contrasting their land reforms to those of the Chinese Communist Party.

In his book, "Making Revolution," Chen Yung-fa discusses how the CCP made use of conflict, encouraging peasants to struggle against rural elites in order to unify together. This struggle was constant, for once a struggle was completed against one social group, the lines were redrawn and the process started over again. Through strategic use of conflict, the CCP was able to strengthen their grip on the countryside.⁷²

⁷⁰ "省田慶祝農民節記詳 (Sheng Yuan Celebrating Farmers' Day Record)," *農友 (Farmers' Friend)* 1952: 21.

⁷¹ Several speeches in the special Farmers' Day edition of "Farmers' Friend" express this sentiment. See: Cai Pei-hao 蔡培火, "農民節感言 (Words of Thanks on Farmer's Day)," *農友 (Farmers' Friend)* 1952: 8; Zhao Lian-lung 趙連芳, "中華民國十一年農民節獻辭 (ROC 1952 Farmer's Day Speech)," *農友 (Farmers' Friend)* 1952: 11; Shi-nan 林世南 Lin, "Farmer's Day Words of Thanks: 農民節感言," *Farmers' Friend*, 14; Chen Mian-xu 陳勉修, "紀念農民節明維護農民利益 (Commemorating Farmer's Day and Protecting Farmer's Rights)," *農友 (Farmers' Friend)* 1952: 12.

⁷² Yung-fa Chen, *Making Revolution: The Communist Movement in Eastern and Central China, 1937*.

In Taiwan, the Nationalist party would mention these conflicts, highlighting the continual violence and lack of peace under the CCP, in an effort to scare people. They warned that if the people of Taiwan did not help them, then the Communists would take over the island and Taiwan would be subject to the same never-ending violence. Furthermore, they argued that what the CCP termed land reforms did not give peasants their own land but rather turned everyone into tenants, making the CCP one large landlord. In arguments directed to landlords, they stated that the CCP killed landlords and treated them cruelly, took their land and property, and forced landlords to repay the rent they collected.⁷⁵ In Taiwan however, landlords were not treated this way. Taiwan's land reforms were built on principles of peace and cooperation which allowed farmers to buy their own land while also compensating landlords for the loss of their land. For this reason, "landlords in Taiwan could be considered the luckiest landlords."⁷⁶

A comic strip expressing a landlord's worry that land limitations would affect his lifestyle presents a similar argument (see Figure 1). The comic states the land

1945 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

⁷⁵ Liu Shi-chang 劉世昌, "限田實施前地主應有的認識 (Things Landlords Should Know About Land Limitation Implementation)," 農友 (*Farmer's Friend*) 1952, 4.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.



Caption reads: Mr. Wang's friend, Lin Landlord, comes to visit him. Lin Landlord asks, "Will land limitation affect the lives of landlords?"



Caption reads: Mr. Wang's friend, Expert Li tells him, "The government's land limitations are done on the principle of fairness. Not like the Communists, who will take your land and your life."

Figure 1, 限田政策 (Land Limitation Policy).



Caption reads: After land limitations here, everyone will have food to eat and a peaceful life. Not like the Communists where both landlords and peasants have nothing to eat.



Caption reads: Everyone holds hands, cooperating together to increase production. Lin Landlord leaves happily.

Figure 1 cont.

limitation policy is based upon fair principles and will enable everyone to have enough to eat and have a stable life. It contrasts this policy to land reforms in China, where landlord's land and lives are forcibly taken and there is not enough to eat. In the end, the landlord accepts the policy and agrees to do his part in implementing it.⁷⁵ In this image, everyone seems happy and satisfied, convinced that land reform as constituted was in the country's best interest. Partly through this rhetoric, as well as the previous groundwork in rent reduction, the Nationalist government was able to implement the Land-to-Tiller land reforms with little difficulty.

While highlighting their differences from the Communists, the Nationalist regime also tried to patch up animosity between native Taiwanese and mainlanders. This effort is expressed in the story, "The Harvest."⁷⁶ This story tells of a group of soldiers who go out to help farmers harvest their crop. While doing so, the protagonist befriends a Taiwanese farm girl and is surprised at how mature, hardworking and well-spoken she is. She, on the other hand, is surprised at how polite and helpful the soldiers were and discovers the soldier's background in China was not much different

⁷⁵ Lu Zeng-hui 陸增輝, "限田政策 (上) ((Land Limitation Policy (Part 1)))," *農友 (Farmers' Friend)* 1953. 27.; Lu Zeng-hui 陸增輝, "限田政策 (下) ((Land Limitation Policy (Part 2)))," *農友 (Farmers' Friend)* 1953. 33.

⁷⁶ Wen Ming 文明, "割稻記 (the Harvest)," *農友 (Farmers' Friend)* 1951. 15.

from hers.⁷⁷

The portrayal of the soldier's background as similar to the Taiwanese girl's, creates an attachment between the two, and as the conversation continues, they come to an understanding of one another and a friendship develops. In the end, she sees the soldier not as a monster, but as an ordinary person who loves and misses his home. She also feels a sort of pity for the soldier's loss of his home to the Communists and would like to help out with efforts to take it back.⁷⁸ Through stories like this, and through sending soldiers out into the countryside to help farmers harvest their crops,⁷⁹ the Nationalists hammered home the message that they were there to help the people of Taiwan.

The government also presented itself as the farmers' friends through the Farmers' Association. The Farmers' Association acted as the point of everyday contact between farmers and the government by performing services for the government such

⁷⁷ Like other articles already noted, this story highlights the Nationalists' difference from the Communists, portraying them as thieves and destroying the soldiers' home. In a nostalgic recollection of his home, the soldier tells the girl his home, "has already been occupied by the Communists; the fields lie barren, the reeds abandoned and becoming waste. My home broken and the people fled..." Ibid. 15. By indicating the wastefulness and destruction the Communists bring, the story emphasizes the need for the people of Taiwan to help retake China, lest Taiwan becomes overtaken by the Communists as well.

⁷⁸ Ibid. 15.

⁷⁹ "各地駐軍助民割稻 (Soldiers from Each Area Help Farmers Harvest)," *農友 (Farmers' Friend)* 1951. 21.

as collecting taxes paid for in rice, storage of rice and distribution of fertilizer. Moreover, the Nationalist government recognized they needed the organization to deeply penetrate rural areas.⁸⁰ Therefore, it was careful to appear supportive and responsive to the Farmers' Association, seeing that support of the organization was equal to supporting farmers.

Several passages in the "Farmers' Friend" express the government's support for the Farmers' Association, claiming they were working hard to reorganize it so it could more effectively serve farmers.⁸¹ Provincial Governor Wu insisted the government was increasing its assistance to the Farmers' Association, with hopes that by doing so the organization could become more fully developed and efficient.⁸² Additionally, the government claimed they would not allow the Farmers' Association to have budgetary difficulties and would support them financially.⁸³ Despite these claims, however, as already noted, one of the organizations most common complaints was the government

⁸⁰ "發刊詞 (Opening Statements)." 1.

⁸¹ Provincial Farmers' Association 省農會, "告全省農友書 (Advise the Entire Province Farmers' Friend Letter)," *農友 (Farmers' Friend)* 1953. 5.

⁸² "吳主席在大會致詞稱 (Words of Premier Wu at the Large Meeting)," *農友 (Farmers' Friend)* 1952. 22.

⁸³ "農會與鄉鎮建設 (Farmers' Association and Township Construction)," *農友 (Farmers' Friend)* 1952. 3.

did not provide them with sufficient funds.⁸⁴

Two explanations account for the failure to provide enough funds. The first one confirms the Farmers' Association suspicions mentioned earlier, that the Nationalists were acutely aware of the organization's influence, and therefore, were careful to control it as much as possible.⁸⁵ It suggests this was a political strategy the Nationalists used to appear they were doing all they could for the Farmers' Association while at the same time holding it under their thumb. Limiting funds was one manner of limiting its political influence.⁸⁶

Duara provides the other explanation, showing how local government was always short of funds in Republican China. Due to the Nationalist's eagerness to

⁸⁴ "對改組農會的希望 (Hopes for Reforming the Farmers' Association)" 4.

"改組, 望中希望政府趕快設立農會輔導機構 (within Reorganization, Hope the Government Quickly Establishes a Subsidy System)" 4.

⁸⁵ In the "Farmers' Friend", Liu Shi-chang goes so far as to say without government oversight organizations are dangerous. See Liu Shi-chang 劉世昌, "農會 合作社: 獎勵員 (Farmers' Association, Co-Op, Mobilization)," 農友 (*Farmers' Friend*) 1952.

⁸⁶ Along with the previously noted tactic of allowing multiple government agencies to oversee the organization at the same time, the government would also try to control the organization from within by influencing its leaders, something Jacobs and Siavis write, became easier once local elections, both for the Farmers' Association and local government, were implemented since the government could manipulate the candidates, thus ensuring the organization remained sympathetic to their cause. See J. Bruce Jacobs, *Local Politics in a Rural Chinese Cultural Setting: A Field Study of Mazu Township, Taiwan* (Canberra: Contemporary China Centre Research School of Pacific Studies Australian National University, 1980), 23, 24.; Siavis, 50-59, 66.

appear modern, they created a number of overlapping bureaucracies which spread funds too thin.⁸⁷ A similar situation occurred later in Taiwan. However, in Taiwan, it was not so much a problem of bureaucracies being spread too thin, but rather that other concerns, namely the military,⁸⁸ took priority over rural organizations.

The Nationalist government also tried to present itself as the farmers' friend by attempting to rectify problems they had in the past. For example, Duara writes of the difficulties the Nationalists had during the Republican period in extending their reach to the local level. According to his analysis, issues with tax collection created a power vacuum by discouraging traditional elite from performing leadership roles. As a result, self-serving individuals, who often overcharged the amount of tax owed in order to pocket some of the money for themselves, began to perform local leadership duties. In turn, this caused villagers to despise the government and whoever represented it. Along with harming the government's reputation, it also reduced the amount of tax the government could claim for themselves.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Prasenjit Duara, *Culture, Power, and the State: Rural North China, 1900-1942* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1988). 81-83.

⁸⁸ Wang Hong-zen reports that between 1952-56, national defense on average took up 80.9% of the central government's budget. Hong-zen Wang, "Class Structures and Social Mobility in Taiwan in the Initial Post-War Period," *The China Journal* 48, no. July (2002). 77.

⁸⁹ See: Duara. Chapter 3: Building the Modern State in North China. 58-85.

Although Taiwan in the 1950s bears some resemblance to this situation (they did use the Farmers' Association as tax collection agents and they did create a power vacuum in the countryside) major differences did exist. These differences provided the Nationalist government with far greater control over rural areas in Taiwan than they ever had over northern China. First, the government never lost the direct power to tax as they had in northern China and were thereby able to better ensure that tax revenues were used on local projects.⁹⁰ The Farmers' Association did not set the rate of tax but was merely the point where farmers paid it. Instead, the central government set the amount of land tax according to cadastration records inherited from the Japanese⁹¹ and later updated by surveys carried out by Rent Reduction and Land-to-Tiller Committees when preparing for land reforms.⁹² Supposedly this system provided a check on tax collection abuse since farmers could report irregularities to county officials or make an appeal to them if they believed they were overtaxed for the amount of land they owned.

With regard to the power vacuum, several scholars suggest this was the planned result of land reforms. According to their arguments, implementing Land-to-Tiller

⁹⁰ For a sample breakdown on tax distribution and local government expenses, see: Slavis. 46-49.

⁹¹ Yhi-min Ho, *Agricultural Development of Taiwan: 1903-1960* (Kingsport, Tennessee: Vanderbilt UP, 1966). 81.

⁹² Yang. 17.

took away landlords' economic and political power base, thus removing them from positions of power.⁹³ While this argument is oversimplified, a power vacuum nevertheless did occur. The reason for it however, had more to do with the result of the fears created by the 228 Incident⁹⁴ and urban migration.⁹⁵ According to some, this power vacuum created instability and insecurity among local villagers since they no longer had anyone to protect them, making it easy for the Nationalists to come in and fill the void through the use of elections and the influence of already existing organizations such as the Farmers' Association.⁹⁶ To others, however, land reforms created greater security among farmers as it provided them with greater protection from

⁹³ Bruce J Dickson, "The Lessons of Defeat: The Reorganization of the Kuomintang on Taiwan, 1950-52," *The China Quarterly* 133 (1993). 64. Indeed, Gallin, writing in 1957 states that landlords still dominated the local political scene but this was beginning to change somewhat due to urban migration. Gallin. 115.; Arthur Lerman, J, "National Elite and Local Politician in Taiwan," *The American Political Science Review* 71, no. 4 (1977). 1415.; Stuart E Thompson, "Taiwan: Rural Society," *The China Quarterly* 99, no. Sept (1984). 558, 562.

⁹⁴ Phillips. 115-139.; Tsai. 51.; Wang, "Class Structures and Social Mobility in Taiwan in the Initial Post-War Period." 69.

⁹⁵ For sources dealing with urban migration in Taiwan, see: Thompson.; Chun-Hao: 李俊豪 Li, "Labor Migration in a Rural Village in Post-War Taiwan: 戰後台灣農村動遷徙現象: 以小龍村為列," *Journal of Population Studies: 人口學刊* 31, no. 12 (2005).

⁹⁶ Dickson. 74.; Lerman. 1415-19.; Bruce J Jacobs, "The Cultural Bases of Factional Alignment and Division in a Rural Taiwanese Township," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 36, no. 1 (1976). 83. Jacobs, *Local Politics in a Rural Chinese Cultural Setting : A Field Study of Mazu Township, Taiwan*. 23.; "發刊詞 (Opening Statements)." 1.

landlord exploitation.⁹⁷ In either argument, farmers developed an increased social consciousness through the Farmers' Association.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Huang, 121.

⁹⁸ Ibid. 123-27.

THE CREATION OF THE MODERN, NATIONALIST

FARMER CITIZEN⁹⁹

According to the spirit of the Three Principles of the People, revolution is peaceful. We hope all is built upon the foundation of cooperation.... This revolution will be successful if only farmers cast off old ideas, wake up and exercise democratic power.¹⁰⁰

While both the Nationalist government and the Farmers' Association presented themselves as friends and protectors of farmers by attempting to manipulate perceptions and improving their organizations, they also sought to portray themselves as political and cultural guides as well. Moreover, they attempted to show how through this guidance, they could lift up the farmers, improve their lives and lead them

⁹⁹ A recent trend in scholarly research on Taiwan addresses the question of Taiwan's identity. Several recent books by authors such as Melissa Brown and Scott Simon, to name a couple, take an anthropological approach to determine whether or not recent Taiwanese arguments that they are not ethnically Chinese are justified. While linked to this question, this section does not address the issue of whether or not the people of Taiwan are Chinese. Instead, it deals with the methodology used by the Nationalist government to convince them that they were Chinese. See: Melissa J Brown, *Is Taiwan Chinese?: The Impact of Culture, Power, and Migrations on Changing Identities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).; Scott Simon, *Tanners of Taiwan: Life Strategies and National Culture* (Cambridge: Westview Press, 2005).

¹⁰⁰ 劉世昌, "農民的大事 (Farmers' Great Work)." 36.

into the future. Working through the Farmers' Association, the Nationalist government used the "Farmers' Friend" to provide a model of the ideal farmer. Ma You-yue provided an additional, concrete example of how this could be done. Together, the government and the Farmers' Association sought to create citizens who accepted and participated in their world view, characterized by Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles of the People.

The concept and process of "citizen creation" were not new to the Nationalist regime, which already had nearly three decades of practice in trying to "awaken" the people of China. In his work, John Fitzgerald describes the efforts of both the Nationalist and Communist parties to uplift the common "Chinaman." As Fitzgerald writes, by attacking culture, language, family ties and social organization, what began as a political revolution evolved into a social revolution which sought to generate a common nationalist identity in which all participated.¹⁰¹

While the Nationalists engaged in citizen creation in Taiwan, their starting point differed from that of revolutionary China. Fitzgerald notes the early Communist leader Dai Jitao's remark that China was a blank sheet of paper¹⁰² on which competing

¹⁰¹ Fitzgerald. 15. 17.

¹⁰² Ibid. 19.

Nationalist and Communist parties competed to paint their own landscape. In Taiwan however, as the Nationalists perceived it, the sheet was not blank. It had already been painted on using Japanese characters. Unlike in much of China, the people of Taiwan had already been introduced to modernization through their Japanese colonial rulers. The Nationalists also came to the island claiming to be the repository of Chinese tradition.¹⁰³ Therefore their goal was to create a blend of old and new, reinforcing Taiwanese exposure to modernization while stripping away their Japanese habits and re-sinifying them. In other words, the emphasis on citizen creation in Taiwan was placed not so much upon “awakening”¹⁰⁴ as it was upon erasing the sheet of paper so it could be drawn upon again.

Rural Society's Image

The process of erasing, then redrawing the landscape of Taiwan's rural society is expressed through the evolution of the cover of the "Farmers' Friend" (see Figure 2).

¹⁰³ This claim was in contrast to the Communist government which they argued sought to destroy Chinese society. Allen Chun, "From Nationalism to Nationalizing: Cultural Imagination and State Formation in Postwar Taiwan," *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* 31 (1994). 53.

¹⁰⁴ The concept of awakening had not completely disappeared from the Nationalist program in Taiwan, yet the focus of such was more upon waking Taiwanese citizens up to how good they had it under the Nationalist regime. This concept is present in the words of Cai Pei-huo, a Taiwanese collaborator with the KMT party, when he writes, “The people in Taiwan need to wake up and appreciate what the government has done for them in giving them local self governance.” 蔡培火. 8.



January 1952



July 1952



January 1953

Figure 2, Cover art for the "Farmers' Friend" from 1952 to 1953. Notice the progression from simplistic and rustic to increasingly complex and industrialized.

This ideal promoted on the cover grows larger and comes closer to fruition as the journal continues to circulate year after year. In the first year of the journal, beginning in 1950 under the title, “Farmers' Association Communications Bi-Weekly” and later under the name the “Farmers' Friend” in mid 1951, the cover was nearly blank. It merely contained a title and a list of contents with very faint images of domesticated animals in the background. Much like the cover, this is how the Nationalists perceived the farmers upon their arrival in Taiwan: blank. According to Chiang Kai-shek, they did not understand the value of time, records keeping or numbers. Nor did they understand the importance of studying and researching to improve. They were wasteful, went against science and were essentially lazy.¹⁰⁵ They were not yet prepared to receive citizenship status in the new society the Nationalists sought to create for them and certainly they were not ready to fully participate in the “Four Large Goals” the Nationalist government had prepared for farmers. These goals were: 1. Get farmers involved in retaking China (referred to as a “holy” work); 2. Implement land reforms: to equalize land rights, protect farmers who tilled their own lands, and assist tenants to get their own lands (it notes here they are now selling public lands and will soon

¹⁰⁵ Liu Shi-chang 劉世昌, “改革農業社會習性 (Revolutionize Agricultural Society's Habits),” *農友 (Farmers' Friend)* 1953. 5.

implement land restrictions); 3. Implement local self-rule and democratic principles (the author notes farmers are underrepresented and the party hopes to increase farmers' political standing); and 4. Develop Farmers' Associations to better protect farmers' interests.¹⁰⁶

By the second year, the cover showed an idyllic, country scene. In the foreground is a house alongside a long road which crosses a bridge and curves off in the distance, all of which are surrounded by flourishing fields. It is a quiet, peaceful image of stability and the only activity shown is an ox pulling a cart in the foreground and what may be a car on the bridge. Despite its quietness, it expresses growth and, in relation to the previous year's cover, improvement. It is an image meant to represent the farmers' growing contentment, stability, and the improved livelihood they received from the government's agricultural policy.

Midway through the second year, the cover changes once again. This time showing a baby in a cradle, surrounded by pigs and sheep in the forefront with an old couple, presumably the child's grandparents, sitting in the center of the picture. The grandmother is petting a dog and the grandfather is smoking a pipe, both with happy,

¹⁰⁶ "谷正綱致詞說明國民黨四大主張 (Gu Zhengwang Explains the Kmt 4 Large Goals)," *農友 (Farmers' Friend)* 1952. 22.

content smiles on their faces. Further up the page is a man feeding chickens with a large water wheel to his left. Finally, the image is completed with three airplanes flying overhead.

This image shows progression over the idyllic countryside cover, and could be interpreted as a close up of the cottage in the previous scene. It maintains the presence of peace and stability from the other image, yet this time, by focusing on the people, it indicates a sense of satisfaction with their current standard of living. Certainly, by placing this picture on the cover, the "Farmers' Friend" is highlighting the prosperity farmers obtained through land reforms. At the same time, by picturing three generations together, the grandparents resting and watching over the grandchild while the father works to support them, the image stirs up feelings of the traditional values of filial piety and family solidarity. As Allen Chun writes, the Nationalists sought to extend these feelings of family solidarity to the nation-state.¹⁰⁷ This link to the nation is fully realized with the subtle hint of progress, as the image leads the viewer from the water wheel to the emergence of industrialization in the form of aircraft. Not only does the presence of the aircraft represent industrialization, it also reflects Nationalist goals to militarize and retake China as well as signifying the Nationalist defense of the island.

¹⁰⁷ Chun. 60.

Combined together, the image shows the beginnings of a unified society, where the family, happily working the fields, assists in developing the nation while airplanes overhead protect them from the Communist menace.

The third year's cover completes the progression to a unified society and shows a fruition of the Nationalist's Four Large Goals. Here, farmers dressed in modern attire, are busily working together to bundle sugar cane and load them onto an oxcart. Further back is a trail of ox carts, winding down to a sugar refinery. Behind that is a large body of water (most likely the Taiwan Strait) filled with ships, and a skyline of what appears to be Shanghai highlighted with radiant sunbeams. In this image we see into both the past, and future of 1953: the past, because the activity speaks to 1952, which the Nationalists declared the "Year of Mobilization" and the future, because it portrays the coming industrialization and improved economic production expected of the forthcoming Land-to-Tiller policy.

Regardless of whether the reader chose to view it as an image of the recent past or near future, it reflects the achievement of the Nationalist's Four Large Goals. First, it shows farmers working hard and mobilizing their efforts to produce sugar, Taiwan's main export crop and resource for obtaining foreign reserves. Since these foreign reserves would help strengthen the nation's military, the image shows farmers helping

prepare to retake China. The image of Shanghai in the background also expresses this concept, serving as a reminder of what the Nationalist's ultimate goal was. On top of that, it shows them working proactively and cooperating together, expressing the goals of developing self rule and strengthening the Farmers' Association to create unity. Finally, as the image progresses, the people progress with it, developing from an agrarian society into an industrial one. This was the goal of Land-to-Tiller, to equally distribute land and more efficiently use resources to develop industry. Again, the backdrop of Shanghai as a flourishing city with radiant beams, also serves as a reminder of the desire to build a modern society.

While presenting images of progression toward the ideal citizen on its cover, on the inside, the journal went about instructing how this was done through the use of technical articles and “spiritual” articles. Technical articles, which made up the greater part of the journal, introduced farmers to the latest agricultural methods in the hope that farmers could utilize this information to increase production, thus helping modernize society.¹⁰⁸ Meanwhile, “spiritual” articles sought to instruct farmers on the essence of the ideal citizen farmer through stories, poems, comics, and opinion pieces teaching the

¹⁰⁸ 馬有岳, “農友的理想與做法 (Farmers' Friend's Ideals and Methods: Opening Statement).” 2; Gao Tu 高塗, “四十二年度農民節之回頭與前瞻 (1953s Farmers' Day Reflecting Back and Looking Forward),” 農友 (*Farmers' Friend*) 1953. 12.

values and behaviors farmers should develop. As already noted, in both kinds of articles, the intention was to first spread the information to local Farmers' Association leadership who would then pass it along to the organization's general membership.

Transforming the Taiwanese Farmer

Writing on the early Republican period, Henrietta Harrison explains how the Nationalist party co-opted, and then replaced the symbols of the 1911 Revolution in order to create patriotic citizens who supported the party. She explains that the Nationalists defined citizenship as support for the party being equal to support for the nation.¹⁰⁹

In Taiwan, this argument was slightly different. Taiwanese people were not fully trusted as members within the party and, as a result of their prior relationship with Japan and the 228 Incident, the Nationalists questioned their loyalty. For this reason, individuals like Ma You-yue would never be able to advance beyond the provincial level of government administration. In Ma's case, while he was both an elected member of the Taiwan Provincial Assembly and Director of the Farmers' Association, he still had very little decision making power. For the most part, his positions merely

¹⁰⁹ Henrietta Harrison, *The Making of the Republican Citizen: Political Ceremonies and Symbols in China, 1911-1929* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). 201.

gave him an opportunity to participate as an advisor and influence policy through the manner in which he carried out directives.

This is not to say however, that men like Ma were not needed. The Nationalist party was greatly outnumbered on the island, especially in rural areas which had a ratio of 8:13 in favor of nonparty officials,¹¹⁰ which required the Nationalists make use of men who would assist them and carry out their aims. As a result, the Nationalist party altered their rubric as to what constituted proper citizenship. Previously, proper citizenship required supporting the party which, to the Nationalists, equaled supporting the nation. In Taiwan however, the Nationalists relaxed this requirement so that merely supporting the party's policies would be equal to supporting the nation. In the case of land reforms, this mainly referred to supporting land reforms, increasing production, and helping to recover China.¹¹¹

The Nationalists also needed to alter the manner in which they used symbols to create citizens in Taiwan. Harrison writes about how, following Sun Yat-sen's death,

¹¹⁰ Dickson. 74.

¹¹¹ For evidence of the KMT equalizing support of their policies to support of the nation, see: "增產公約 (Increase Production Contract)," *農友 (Farmers' Friend)* 1952. 15.; "反共抗俄救國公約 (Overthrow Communism, Resist the Soviet Union, Save the Country Contract)," *農友 (Farmers' Friend)* 1952. Both of these contracts essentially state that farmers will support the KMT policies of working hard to increase production and help recover China.

Chiang Kai-shek used Sun's image, and his relationship to him, to solidify his power within the party.¹¹² Effectively, Sun became a symbol, where professed love for him equaled love for the nation and the party he created.

In Taiwan however, the symbol of Sun could not operate in the same manner. Because the Nationalist party had not yet indoctrinated the people of Taiwan with their symbols and culture,¹¹³ the Taiwanese felt no connection to Sun Yat-sen, and therefore he could not be used as a symbol associated with patriotism. Therefore, the Nationalists needed to create a connection between Sun and Taiwanese farmers. This was done by emphasizing Sun's role as creator of the Three Principles of the People and originator of land reforms. By highlighting the Three Principles of the People as the means to creating a modern society, and through implementing land reforms, the Nationalists helped forge a mental link between the society that was being created and the man who thought it up, Sun Yat-sen.

This was especially true in regard to land reforms. Farmers could draw a connection between the land reforms' concrete results of paying less in rent and

¹¹² Harrison. 185, 86.

¹¹³ At this point in time, the Nationalists were in the process of indoctrinating Taiwanese children at school and military training camps. For an excellent source discussing the Nationalists acculturating Taiwanese people, see: Chun.; Gallin. 195-204.

owning land, and the individual who created the ideology behind it. Thereby, they could come to appreciate Sun for devising the means to improve their lives. The Nationalists hoped to further solidify this connection by drawing upon the Three Principles of the People as a guide for carrying out land reforms. As the final definer of the Three Principles of the People, Chiang Kai-shek's administration could use Sun's teachings to emphasize peaceful, cooperative values.¹¹⁴ By referencing the Three Principles of the People as a means for generating non-violent revolution (as opposed to the revolution occurring on the mainland), Taiwan could be grateful to Sun, who masterminded this peaceful undertaking, and for the current Nationalist leadership who implemented it. In this way, the Nationalist government could begin to build up a perception that Sun as the father of the Republic of China, was also the father of Taiwan.

Returning to Fitzgerald's discussion on awakening, the quote following the section heading notes that farmers needed to cast off old ideas. This concept was a continuation of efforts to create the modern citizen dating back to the turn of the century. It also echoed the ideas of Wu Zhihui who wrote nearly fifty years earlier that

¹¹⁴ See the quote following the section heading.

old customs needed to be abandoned.¹¹⁵ As Fitzgerald notes, Wu was referring specifically to Confucian moral customs and social hierarchies.¹¹⁶ However, time and geographic difference changed the meaning of casting off old ideas. In Taiwan's case, casting off old ideas was directed less at Confucian values than at activities the Nationalists viewed as wasteful and not appropriate for modern citizens. Now that the Nationalists proclaimed themselves to be the protectors of traditional China, Confucian morals were acceptable, even encouraged since promoting them also served the function of washing away the stench of Japanese influence. This explains the numerous stories found in the "Farmers' Friend" which tell of virtuous deeds of past Confucian scholar officials and present tales teaching the value of honesty and hard work. In part, these stories were to help familiarize Taiwanese with Chinese culture, while also serving the purpose of teaching moral principles.

One such story, Mr. Hard Worker, tells of a boy who ran away from school because the principal was too strict. While travelling as far away from school as he could get, he encountered several men who failed in life due to lack of effort and discipline. Frightened by what he saw, the boy determined that the principal's

¹¹⁵ Fitzgerald. 78.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. 78.

strictness was not so bad after all and returned to school.¹¹⁷ The message in the story is obvious, work hard or you will fail. It also implies, however, that the government, playing the role of principal, knows what is best and the citizens will benefit from going along with their instruction, even if it does seem harsh at times.

While supporting Confucian values in some respects, the Nationalist government also tried to limit some Chinese traditions. One target they sought to curb was religious festivities, which they considered to be wasteful, superstitious practices. Like the Nationalists' other efforts at citizen creation, their approach to limiting religious practices in Taiwan differed from what had been tried in the past. Instead of violent attacks on temples,¹¹⁸ the government tried to limit the month long festival of Pudu to just one day by convincing farmers it was not necessary to celebrate for such a long period when a much shorter one would suffice.¹¹⁹ Articles in the "Farmers' Friend" noted the extravagant costs of these celebrations, citing them as the reason for

¹¹⁷ "辛苦先生 (Mr. Hardworker)," *農友 (Farmers' Friend)* 1952. 12, 13.

¹¹⁸ Harrison. 200.

¹¹⁹ David Jordan reports that eventually these efforts were successful less from government encouragement than from changes within the society such as industrialization making it difficult for individuals to use so much time on festivals and an increase in wealth changing the way festivals were perceived. David K Jordan, "Changes in Postwar Taiwan and Their Impact on the Popular Practice of Religion," in *Cultural Change in Postwar Taiwan*, ed. Huang Chun-chieh Stevan Harrell (Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford: Westview Press, 1994). 149.

farmers failing to see positive results from land reforms. They argued the results were there, just that the extra resources land reforms generated were thrown into more extravagant celebrations. Claiming the nation was in a state of war, the government encouraged villages to be more frugal and invest their extra income in agriculture to help boost production.¹¹⁹

To strengthen their argument, they linked festivals to poor hygiene, claiming that food left out for long periods was making people sick. By making this connection with hygiene, festivals could be linked to backward, vulgar practices such as keeping pigs in the kitchen¹²⁰ or, as Fitzgerald mentions, farting, burping and spitting, all indicators that the Chinese people had not yet entered the modern world.¹²¹

Despite this backwardness, not all hope was lost. The "Farmers' Friend" turns the issue of hygiene and festivals into a learning and citizenship participation opportunity. This opportunity comes in a comic strip showing "Mr. Wang"¹²² going out

¹¹⁹ For mention of Taiwan religious beliefs in the "Farmers' Friend", see: "舊村迷信亟需掃除 (Village Superstitions Urgently Need to Be Cleared up)," *農友 (Farmers' Friend)* 1951; "改革舊度與社會改造 (Revolutionize Pudu and Social Reform)," *農友 (Farmers' Friend)* 1952.

¹²⁰ Lu Zang-hui 陸增輝, "環境衛生 (Environmental Sanitation)," *農友 (Farmers' Friend)* 1952: 14, 15.

¹²¹ Fitzgerald: 9, 10.

¹²² Mr. Wang is the main character throughout the comic strips in the "Farmers' Friend". His character is that of a humble, bullhorn-yet-also someone who is trying to be a modern man and learn from those around him, especially the experts within the Farmers' Association.

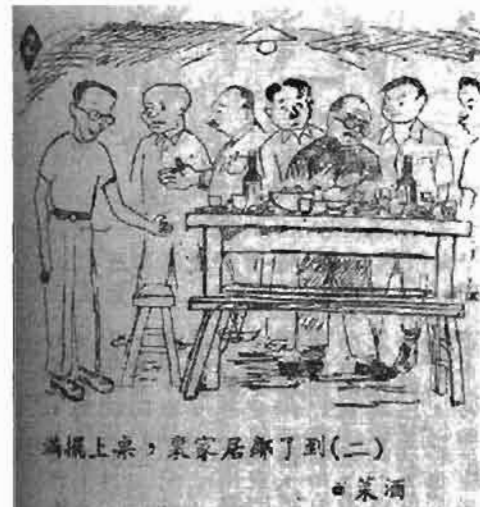
with friends and family to celebrate a religious festival (see Figure 3).¹²⁴ Up until late at night drinking and eating, all the family of the host became sick the following day. The next scene shows Mr. Wang discussing this sickness with the doctor, who points out that not only is such celebration wasteful, but it does not follow proper hygiene and results in sickness. In short, the comic teaches that such superstitious behavior is unbecoming for a modern citizen who should rely on technology and science instead. In the final scene, Mr. Wang is shown in front of community members, teaching them the same lesson he received from the doctor. In doing so, Mr. Wang indicated not only that he learned his lesson but he also took the next step in actively participating to build up the state by becoming a mouthpiece for its cultural messages, thereby completing his transformation into a modern citizen,

Efforts to reform society were not limited to religion. Other targets were wedding celebrations, gambling, drinking, even prostitution.¹²⁵ In general, anything that could be considered to be in discord with their ideal of the modern, Chinese man¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Lu Zeng-hui 陸增輝, "拜拜之災 (上) ((Worshiping's Disaster (Part 1)))," 農友 (*Farmers' Friend*) 1953.; Lu Zeng-hui 陸增輝, "拜拜之災 (下) ((Worshiping's Disaster (Part 2)))," 農友 (*Farmers' Friend*) 1953.

¹²⁵ 劉世昌, "改革農業社會習性 (Revolutionize Agricultural Society's Habits)." 5.

¹²⁶ Emphasis on Chinese is important here. It was critical to highlight Chinese uniqueness and differentiate from earlier Japanese practices on the island, and to a lesser extent, the west as well.



Caption reads: Mr. Wang's community holds a worship festival, many of his neighbors invite him to go eat and drink. At his neighbor's home, the table is piled with food.



Caption reads: When Mr. Wang saw the food and wine, he sat down for awhile before leaving. The next morning, Mr. Wang met the doctor on the side of the road.

Figure 3, 拜拜之災 (Worshipping's Disaster).



• 子肚了壞吃都客一人主東原



• 子肚壞吃人多時有常，拜拜次每，說生醫

Caption reads: It turns out, the host's entire family all became sick to their stomachs. The doctor said, "Whenever there is a worshipping festival, there are always many people who get sick to their stomachs."



• 別告主醫同就王老，他請來客一有又



• 的拜拜拜次每，說生醫

• 點

Caption reads: Another family came to ask the doctor for help so Mr. Wang said goodbye. On the second day, Mr. Wang announced the weaknesses of worshipping.

Figure 3 cont.

could become a target.

One final example highlighting the Nationalist regime's efforts at citizen creation comes from a comic strip teaching the most appropriate way to greet another person. Titled, "Promote Chinese Culture,"¹²⁷ this comic strip shows Mr. Wang teaching another man the best way to greet another person. According to Mr. Wang, the traditional Chinese method of clasping both hands together and giving a slight bow is superior to both western handshakes and the Japanese "deep bow." Using modern science and common sense, Mr. Wang argues the handshake is inferior because it is unsanitary and spreads disease while the possibility of banging heads together exists when performing the "deep bow" (see Figure 4).

In this example, the instruction sets itself apart from Japan and the west, while promoting Chinese tradition in a modern fashion. The common sense justification for refuting the value of the Japanese greeting implies the inherent superiority of Chinese culture. As part of their efforts to re-sinify the people of Taiwan, the Nationalist government was quick to stress this point in an effort to wash away all Japanese influence on the island. By refuting the previously accepted modern method of

¹²⁷ Lu Zeng-hui 陸增輝, "提倡國粹 (Promote Chinese Culture)," 農友 (*Farmers' Friend*) 1953. 27.



Caption reads: Mr. Wang clasps his hands together to greet a friend who came to visit for New Year's. The Western style handshake is not hygienic and shaking hands too much will cause them to swell up and ache.



Caption reads: If you are not careful with the Japanese deep bow, you bump heads together in front and knock over a flower vase in the back. The old method of clasping hands together is the safest, Mr. Wang's friend clasps his hands together and says goodbye.

Figure 4. 提倡國粹 (Promote Chinese Culture).

greeting, the handshake,¹²⁸ the instruction also differentiated modern Chinese citizens from the west. Using modern concepts such as fear of spreading germs as justification, this instruction returned to an earlier, more traditional Chinese greeting used between equals.¹²⁹ In this way, the Nationalists could accomplish their goal of promoting modernity while at the same time, maintaining traditional roots, thereby also justifying their claim to be protectors of Chinese culture.

In many ways, Mr. Wang was the comic incarnation of Ma You-yue, as he completed the transformation into the modern Nationalist citizen. In doing so, he became an example of the transformation into the modern citizen for all of Taiwan's farmers. As shown through his biography, although he came from humble origins, Ma gained an education and became an active participant in the state. Early on, this participation took the form of protest, and at different points in time he protested against both the Japanese and Nationalist regimes. The Nationalist government would have viewed this earlier participation in two ways. First, they would have been supportive of his criticism aimed at the Japanese, considering him a true Chinese son. On the other hand, they would have perceived Ma's participation in the 228 Incident as

¹²⁸ Harrison demonstrates that in the early Republican period, the handshake was promoted as the proper method for modern citizens to greet one another. Harrison. 64.

¹²⁹ Ibid. 53.

selfish, separatist and contrary to the benefit of the nation as a whole.

At that point in his political career, Ma favored Taiwan's autonomous rule, demanding during the 228 Incident that "Only the Taiwanese should rule the island." This does not necessarily mean he supported Taiwan independence, however. Also included in this list of demands was the request to have corrupt officials returned to China.¹³⁰ By combining both of these demands together, he clearly sought some form of political relationship with China where Taiwan maintained self rule yet was not entirely independent of the Nationalist government.

This kind of state participation was not what the Nationalist government hoped for. Instead, what the Nationalists sought in state participation was placement of the nation first, with all other goals second to the survival of the state (the state referring to the Nationalist party-state). Upon his release from prison, Ma continued his participation but only now as a party member, thereby complying with the Nationalist order of priorities. To the Nationalists, his acceptance of the party and willingness to work from within it was indicative of his accepting the Nationalists as his friend, which was exactly the same acceptance and behavior they hoped to get from farmers. In other words, the Nationalists wanted farmers to act as a unified group, one that was willing

¹³⁰ Lai Tse-han. 131.

to put state interests first, and participate in the accomplishment of those interests.

To Ma, however, participation in the system provided by the Nationalist's may have been a matter of convenience and opportunity. This path helped fulfill personal ambitions while enabling him to help others, a concern of his from the beginning of his political participation. In fact, examination of the same demands he made during the 228 Incident shows he was quite concerned about the well-being of everyday citizens and sought to make their lives more comfortable. He also demanded the central government send rice to feed Taiwan's hungry and reduce bus fares for the Suao-Hualien Highway.¹³¹ Such concerns are also quite evident in his writings in the "Farmers' Friend," but these writings closely followed the Nationalist party's expectations and made use of party rhetoric. Occasionally one can sense through his articles in the "Farmers' Friend" that Ma did not always fully agree with the Nationalist government. However, he did realize that cooperation with the Nationalists provided him with the opportunity to express his voice politically through the Farmers' Association. Furthermore, he realized that while he might not always have been able to get satisfactory results using this method, at least limited results were better than having no voice at all, or worse, being imprisoned or even executed.

¹³¹ Ibid. 131.

CONCLUSION

Working through the Farmers' Association and its journal, the "Farmers' Friend," the Nationalist government set out to turn Taiwanese farmers into modern Chinese citizens. To create such citizens, the Nationalists used rhetorical methods and symbols similar to those they had used during the early Republican period in China. However, differences between the mainland and Taiwan's experience required subtle changes to these methods such as emphasizing Chinese culture over modernization.

While promoting modern citizenship ideals, the government also sought to gain the trust of farmers by promoting themselves as their friends, protectors and guides. The Farmers' Association helped accomplish this task through the "Farmers' Friend." Using this journal, Farmers' Association leaders were to teach farmers what it meant to be a modern farmer citizen. Furthermore, the leadership of this organization, most notably Ma You-yue, provided an example for other farmers to emulate. While the government was able to further state penetration through the Farmers' Association and the "Farmers' Friend," the organization and its journal also provided a limited space for

farmers to express their concerns.

For the most part, the Nationalist regime was successful in their goals to create modern, Nationalist farmers. Using messages spread by the Farmers' Association, the Nationalists were able to convince farmers to support their regime. This was done by emphasizing the Nationalists role as protectors while contrasting their policies from those of the Communists, especially in regards to land reforms. This helped create a fear of the Communists and bolstered farmers' (and landlords') willingness to support the regime lest the violence which occurred on the mainland happen on Taiwan as well. It also helped that Taiwan's land reforms turned out successful and the island shortly entered an economic boom. Each of these reasons played a part in the Nationalists solidifying their legitimacy upon the island and the regime never again had to deal with protests on the scale of the 228 Incident.

The Nationalists also succeeded in getting farmers to participate in strengthening the state. This success is most readily apparent in convincing farmers and landlords to go along with the Land-to-Tiller policy. As has been seen, the initial land reform of 37.5% Rent Reduction generated a number of disputes yet the final reform of Land-to-Tiller had almost none. Again, it helps that the reforms were successful and over time, even landlords who were most against land reforms were able

to see some benefits from them. Ma You-yue and men like him provide another example of the Nationalist's success in getting farmers to participate, especially within their local Farmers' Association. Furthermore, the fact that today still, farmers involved in the Farmers' Association are prone to support the Nationalist party in elections,¹³² suggests they did buy into the participation system presented to them.

Finally, through their cultural policies, the Nationalist government was successful in renewing Taiwan's connection with its Chinese roots. Although Taiwanese sometimes may still look back upon Japanese colonialism with a sense of nostalgia, they certainly no longer consider themselves Japanese as some of them once did.¹³³ Instead, they reconnected with their Chinese roots and viewed themselves as Chinese. In recent years, Taiwanese political leaders have questioned this Chinese heritage, emphasizing their "Taiwaneseness," yet the island is still heavily influenced by Chinese tradition, while outside of teenage music and fashion, Japanese influence ceases to exist.

The Nationalists were able to achieve each of these three goals in part through

¹³² This piece of information is taken from a discussion with Dr. Frank T. Hsiao at the Western Association of Asian Studies Conference, September 13, 2008.

¹³³ For reference of Taiwanese considering themselves Japanese, see: Weiming Tu, "Cultural Identity and the Politics of Recognition in Contemporary Taiwan," *The China Quarterly* 148 (1996). Tu comments that former President Li Deng-hui admitted considering himself Japanese up until the age of 22.

the assistance of the Farmers' Association's spreading citizenship creation messages in the "Farmers' Friend." Even though the journal was limited in its readership and failed to accomplish its goal of becoming Taiwan's version of "Readers' Digest," it, along with the Farmers' Association, was influential in aiding the Nationalist regime in deepening their penetration into the countryside and in providing examples of modern, Nationalist citizens through men such as Ma You-yue.

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